

BLACK DIAMOND
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BLACK DIAMOND WESTERN

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LEV GLEASON PUBLISHER AND EDITOR

READY, MEN... HERE
COMES THE SCORPION AND
HIS OUTLAW ARMY!

CHARGE!

AN
ILLUSTRATED
STORY BY
Myron Forder



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"THE HISTORY OF THE WEST IS A GLORIOUS ONE, AND THE TERRIBLE CIVIL WAR MEANT DIFFERENT THINGS TO DIFFERENT PEOPLE! TO THE SETTLERS, IT MEANT PESTILENCE, FAMINE, AND NEEDLESS BLOODSHED! BUT TO THE SCORPION AND HIS GUN-RAMMERS IT MEANT THE BEGINNING OF RICH PICKINGS OF THE BESIEGED TOWNS. COULD EVEN BLACK DIAMOND AND DAVY CROCKETT... FAMOUS LAW-FIGHTER WHOSE GUNS ONCE ENFORCED ORDER IN BULLET-RIDDEN FRONTIER TOWNS, SAVE THE WEST FROM THE SURPRISE..."

RETURN of the SCORPION

THAT BURNING WAGON'S HEADING STRAIGHT AT US!
GET READY TO DUCK...AND FIGHT BACK!

LOOK OUT!
IT'S GONNA CRASH!



THE BOMBARDMENT OF FORT SUMTER, IN THE HARBOR OF CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA BY THE CONFEDERACY OPENED THE CIVIL WAR ON APRIL 12, 1861.



WHEN THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT RECALLED ITS WESTERN GARRISONS, THE SETTLERS WERE LEFT UNPROTECTED AGAINST THE PERILS OF THE FRONTIER...

"SO LONG, LOOTENANT... GUESS WE WON'T BE SEEIN' YUH AGAIN!"

"WE'LL BE AT THE MERCY OF EVERY OWNHOOCH IN THIS TERRITORY! I TELL YUH, WITHOUT THE ARMY, WE'RE ALL DONE FOR!"



AND STRUCK WANTONLY, AS THE SETTLERS WATCHED HELPLESS!



WITHIN DAYS, THE SETTLEMENTS BECAME SCENES OF RIOTING AND TERROR! OUTLAWS, FIGURING THEY HIT A BONANZA, ROBBED AND LOOTED...

"OKAY, MISTER! RAISE YER HOOKS!"

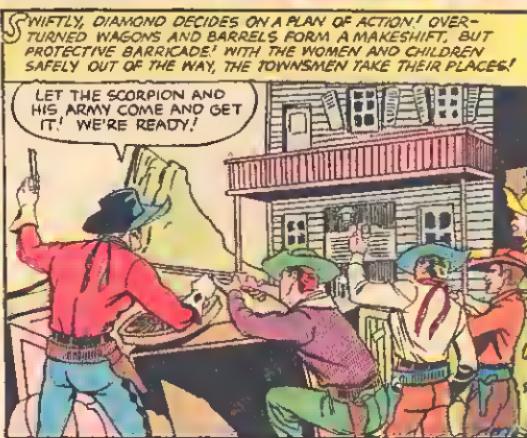
"DON'T SHOOT! I'M UNARMED!"



MEANWHILE, BLACK DIAMOND AND BUMPER BITTERLY FIGHT AGAINST THE OVERWHELMING ODDS. BUT IT WAS LIKE BATTLING AN UNCONTROLLABLE FOREST FIRE... AS SOON AS ONE GANG WAS DESTROYED... THREE MORE SPRANG UP IN IT'S PLACE! AS DIAMOND MAKES CAMP IN A PRAIRIE WATER HOLE, HE SEES...











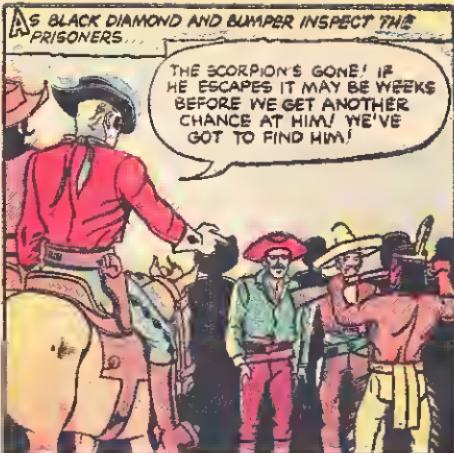
LATER THAT DAY, A WEARY, BUT DETERMINED BLACK DIAMOND ORGANIZES THE SETTLERS. BUT, DESPITE THEIR COURAGE, SUPERIOR NUMBERS WILL TELL... SO DIAMOND SEEKS AID FROM HIS OLD FRIEND, GRAY EAGLE, CHIEF OF THE SHOSHONE...



HE SETTLERS AND THE INDIANS MAKE A FORMIDABLE FOE! TOGETHER, THEY RELENTLESSLY TRACK THE SCORPION... FOLLOWING HIS TRAIL OF PLUNDER...

WE'LL GET HIM, BUMPER! ALL WE HAVE TO DO IS CROSS THIS VALLEY AND RUSH HIM!





FOR AN HOUR, THE GUNS BARK OUT THEIR SHORT, DEADLY MESSAGES...

LET'S RUSH THEM! THEY'RE OUT OF AMMUNITION!

OKAY, RATTLERS! RAISE 'EM!

NOW WE'LL FIND OUT WHO THE SCORPION REALLY IS!

YOU'RE NOT SO MUCH OF A TERROR, WHEN THE ODDS ARE EVEN, ARE YOU, SCORPION? HOW COULD I TELL, DIAMOND?

...WHEN I'M NOT REALLY THE SCORPION! HE JUST USED ME AS A DECOY... TO GIVE HIM TIME TO GET OUT OF THE TERRITORY!

WHAT DO YOU THINK, DIAMOND...? IS THAT OWLHOOOT OUR MAN?

I CAN'T BE SURE, BUMPER... BUT I DON'T THINK SO! IF THE SCORPION'S STILL AROUND... I'LL LOCK HORNS WITH HIM AGAIN!

Bullets and Ballots

ONE OF OUR RIGHTS AS CITIZENS OF THIS GREAT LAND IS SELECTING OUR OFFICIALS BY OPEN PUBLIC ELECTIONS! BUT THERE ARE RUTHLESS MEN WHO LIVE OUTSIDE THE LAW, WHO HOPE TO TAKE OVER PUBLIC OFFICE FOR THEIR OWN DISHONEST PURPOSES! WHEN LUCKY CARSON, AN HOMBRE WITHOUT A CONSCIENCE, TRIES TO CONTROL A TOWN AND TELL FOLKS WHO THEY CAN AND CAN'T VOTE FOR, THAT'S WHERE BLACK DIAMOND LEADS A HAND TO STOP THE EVIL FORCES OF LAWLESSNESS!

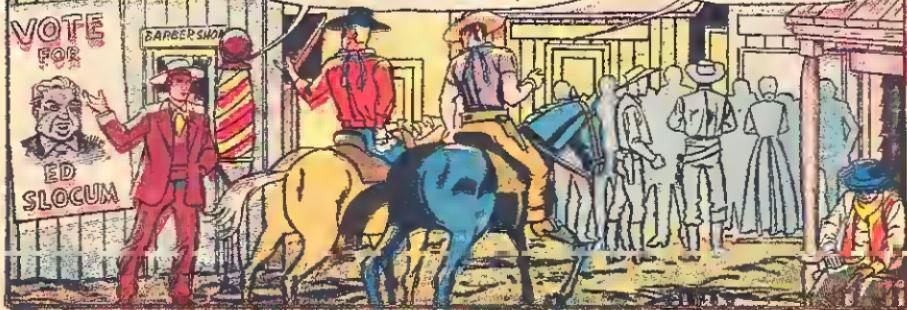
HMMMPH! THOSE MAVERICKS NEVER SAY ANYTHING, BUT IF YUH DON'T VOTE FOR THEIR CANDIDATE, SOMETHIN' MEAN ALWAYS HAPPENS TO YUH...AFTERWARDS!



FROM THE INCUMBENT
MAYOR OF PINE CITY,
BLACK DIAMOND AND
BUMPER GET SOME
DISTURBING NEWS...

I'M WORRIED ABOUT THE ELECTION THAT'S COMING OFF IN THREE DAYS, MARSHALL! THERE'S A GOOD CHANCE I MAY LOSE! LUCKY CARSON IS SPREADING LOTS OF MONEY AROUND TO ELECT ED SLOCUM! IF HE WINS... PINE CITY WILL BECOME A HANGOUT FOR EVERY OUTLAW IN KANSAS!

BUT YOU'VE DONE A DARN GOOD JOB IN OFFICE, TOM! WHY WOULD ANYBODY WANT TO VOTE FOR SLOCUM AGAINST YOU?



IN FRONT OF THE TOWN HALL...

CARSON BROUGHT IN A GANG OF SULGLINGERS TO INTIMIDATE FOLKS WHO WON'T GO ALONG WITH HIS MAN! GLOOM'S MAKING HIS MONEY SPEECHES NOW!

...AND WHEN I'M ELECTED, I'M GOING TO BUILD NEW SCHOOLS... ROADS...



I TELL YOU THIS WILL BE THE BIGGEST LITTLE TOWN IN THE WHOLE WEST!

WAIT UP, SLOCUM! WHERE WILL YOU GET THE MONEY TO BUILD THESE THINGS?

SHUT THAT YOKEL'S BIG MOUTH! HE'S ASKIN' TOO MANY QUESTIONS!



A WISE HOMBRE, EH? TRYIN' TO BUST UP A POLITICAL MEETIN'! YOU BETTER SHUT UP AND JUST LISTEN!

I'M ENTITLED TO ASK QUESTIONS.. BUT I RECKON THIS IS NO PLACE FOR ME...



THE CANDIDATE AIN'T THROUGH WITH HIS SPEECH YET! IT AIN'T POLITE TO LEAVE! I RECKON WE'LL JUST HAVE TO LEARN THIS HICK SOME MANNERS!

HEY! TAKE YOUR HANDS OFF ME!

IT'S TIME WE TOOK A HAND IN THIS BUMPER!

LEAVE THAT MAN ALONE, VARMINTS!

ANOTHER HICK THAT NEEDS A LESSON IN MANNERS!



LOOK OUT, DIAMOND...HE'S DRAWING!

I'LL FIX THAT TIN-BADGE MARSHALL...



AS THE GUNMAN STARTS FOR HIS HOLSTER, BUMPER DRAWS AND...





SPLINTERLY, LUCKY CARSON LEAPS TO THE PLATFORM...

THERE'S A LOT OF OWLHOOTS HEADING FOR THIS TOWN JUST BECAUSE HAWKINS IS IN OFFICE! THEY'RE NOT SCARED OF HIM! HE'S TAKING ORDERS FROM THEM! I TELL YOU TO ELECT SLOCUM AND MAKE THE OWLHOOTS STAY OUT OF TOWN!

THAT'S AN ORNERY LIE! WE NEVER HAD OUTLAWS HERE BEFORE YOU BROUGHT THEM IN!

GET OFF THAT PLATFORM, HAWKINS! WE DON'T WANT TO HEAR YOUR HOGWASH! WE WANT SLOCUM!

BOOOOO!!



LIKE AN UNCOILING SPRING, BLACK DIAMOND EXPLODES INTO MOTION TO STILL THE TROUBLE-MAKERS...

HEY, MAYOR! HERE'S A LITTLE CAMPAIGN DONATION FOR YOU...

BOOOOO!
LET 'EM HAVE IT, BOYS!

NO YOU DON'T!

THIS IS ONE MEETING YOU'RE NOT BREAKING UP!

C'MON! LET'S HELP DIAMOND THROW THOSE VARMINTS OUT!



AS THE HONEST TOWNSPEOPLE JOIN IN THE FRACAS...

PLOW INTO 'EM! WE'VE GOT 'EM LICKED!

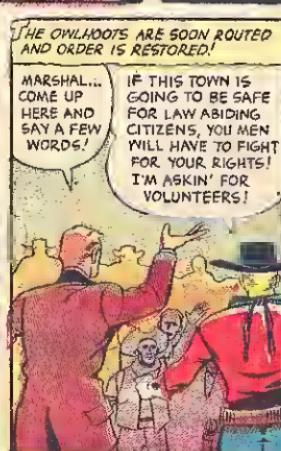
I'M GETTIN' OUTA HERE!



THE OWLHOOTS ARE SOON ROUTED AND ORDER IS RESTORED!

MARSHAL... COME UP HERE AND SAY A FEW WORDS!

IF THIS TOWN IS GOING TO BE SAFE FOR LAW ABIDING CITIZENS, YOU MEN WILL HAVE TO FIGHT FOR YOUR RIGHTS! I'M ASKIN' FOR VOLUNTEERS!



THE FOLLOWING DAY, THE CITIZENS' COMMITTEE GOES INTO ACTION WITH BLACK DIAMOND AND BUMPER TO LEAD THEM!

YOU DIDN'T BRING YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE SLOCUM CAMPAIGN FUND, SO...! HUH?

DROP THOSE HOGLEGS, OWLHOOTS! DROP 'EM AND HIGHTAIL OUT OF HERE!



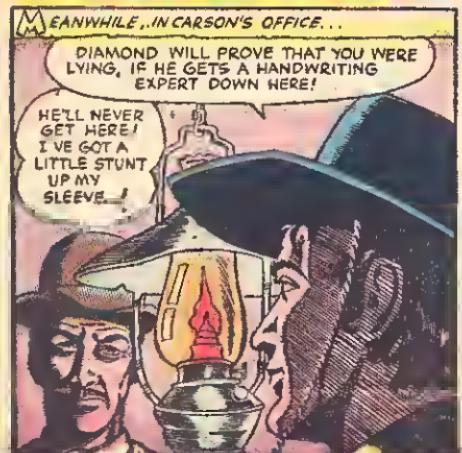


DO YOU THINK THAT'S TRUE ABOUT HAWKINS?



HOW'S ABOUT THROWIN' A LITTLE LIGHT ON THIS STORY CARSON'S SPREADING ABOUT THE MAYOR, DIAMOND!

I'LL BE ABLE TO ANSWER YOU FOLKS AS SOON AS I GET AN ANSWER TO THIS TELEGRAM! PROBABLY AT THE ELECTION EVE RALLY TONIGHT!

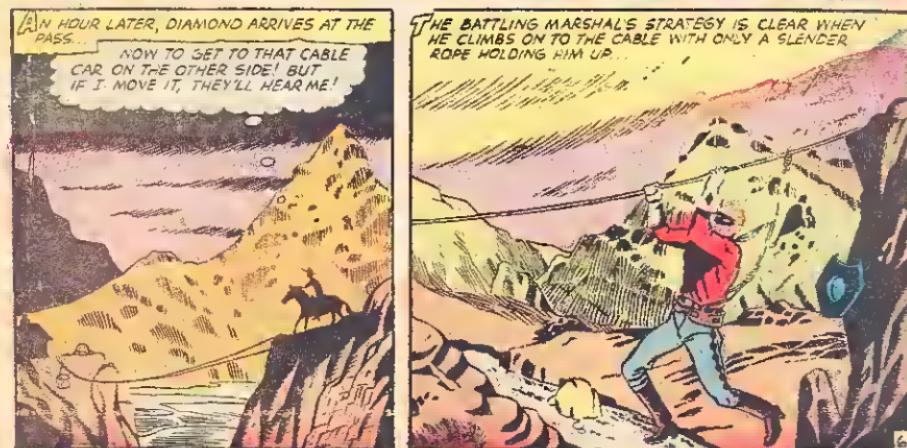
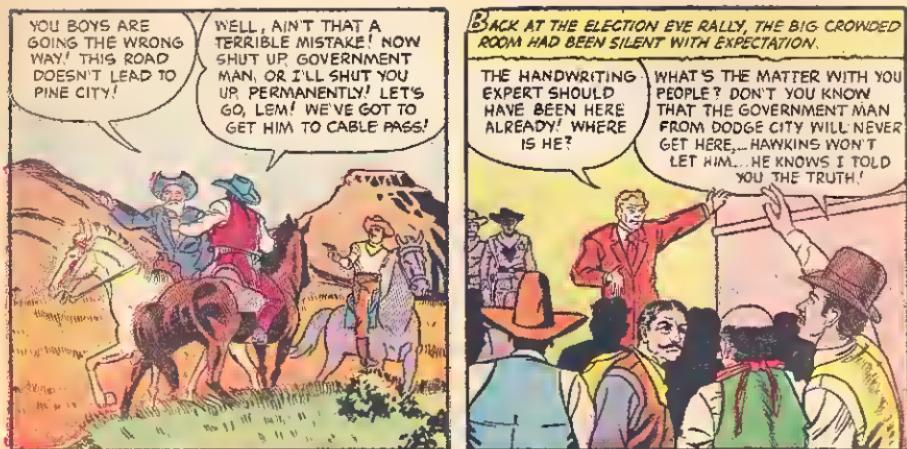


HE'LL NEVER GET HERE! I'VE GOT A LITTLE STUNT UP MY SLEEVE!



WHY, THANK YOU KINDLY! THAT'S RIGHT NICE OF THE MARSHAL!

DODGE CITY



...THE NEXT MOMENT, THE DUMBFOUNDED OWLHOOOT IN THE CABLE CAR IS FINNED BY THE WEIGHT OF THE LANDING CRIMEFIGHTER...

I RECKON YOU'LL HAVE TO PARDON ME FOR DROPPING IN ON YOU, UNINVITED!



I'LL CUT THAT CABLE! IT'LL TAKE CARE OF BOTH OF THEM!



LUCKILY, DIAMOND AND THE GOVERNMENT MAN SCRABBLE ON TO A LEDGE BEFORE THE CAR PLUNGES INTO SPACE...

THERE GOES THE CAR! IT WOULD HAVE BEEN THE END, IF NOT FOR YOU!

NO TIME TO THINK ABOUT THAT NOW! I HAVE TO GET TO PINE CITY BEFORE THE FOLLS OPEN!



SHORTLY AFTERWARDS, BACK IN TOWN...

I DIDN'T SHOW UP LAST NIGHT BECAUSE CARSON'S GANG OF OUTLAWS KIDNAPPED ME AND HELD ME AT CABLE PASS! THE DOCUMENTS HE SHOWED YOU ARE FORGERIES!

NOW WE DON'T KNOW WHO TO BELIEVE!



BLACK DIAMOND KNOWS THERE'S ONLY ONE WAY TO CLEAR UP THE TOWN'S CONFUSION... AND SO, HE HEADS FOR LUCKY CARSON'S GAMBLING PALACE, AS CARSON AND HIS MEN COME CHARGING OUT...

YOU HOMBRES AND I HAVE LOCKED HORNS FOR THE LAST TIME...



THE OUTLAWS START TO DRAW, BLACK DIAMOND'S GUNS SWEEP UP... THERE IS THE DULL THUD OF FALLING WEAPONS. WITH SMOOTH PRECISION, THE MARSHAL MOVES EFFORTLESSLY TO ACTION AND FIRES...

IT LOOKS LIKE YOUR ASSISTANTS ARE IN NEED OF ASSISTANCE THEMSELVES, CARSON!



NO... NO! WE'VE HAD ENOUGH!

ON THE WAY TO JAIL, CARSON IS TAKEN TO THE TOWN SQUARE...

WHAT I TOLD YOU ABOUT MAYOR HAWKINS ISN'T TRUE! I FIGURED IF SLOCUM GOT INTO OFFICE, I COULD TAKE OVER THIS TOWN AND MAKE IT A HANGOUT FOR OUTLAWS AND GAMBLERS!

LET'S RE-ELECT MAYOR HAWKINS IN A LANDSLIDE!



THIEVES' END at GASPER GULCH

by "THE BLACK DIAMOND"



It was in the early summer of 1878, when Bumper and I, along with the help of Chief Young Crazy Fox, rounded up one of the cruellest and tightest little bands of cattle thieves ever to operate in Wyoming, before or after.

It's quite a mystery and story. I don't think we would have had any success at all if it weren't for our friend, Chief Young Crazy Fox, leader of a small group of Pawnees.

Around the little settlement of Five Sleep, stretching for miles in every direction, were some of the biggest cattle ranches of that period. Although there was an awful lot of dry desert in the area, there were miles of green and fertile grazing fields and enough water to keep the cattle from stampeding.

There wasn't much law and order in that part of the country. In fact, there wasn't any except what the ranchers took into their own hands. But there were plenty of cattle thieves, bandits, bold-up men and whatnot. There weren't any courts because there was no law and there were no judges. There weren't any bank robbers because there were no banks. There were no stagecoach robbers because none of the stagecoaches carried any gold, because there were no mines.

Just cattle — enormous herds of fine steers, strong enough and fat enough to be driven 800 miles to market and bring a fancy price.

The marauders in the area concentrated on stealing cattle, whole herds of 500 to 1,000 steers at a time. I was asked to break up the gang. This was a rough job, considering we had no help — just the two of us — Bumper and I.

While we were talking over the problem in the parlor of Mrs. Fay's Boarding House, a young Indian burst in to welcome us and say hello. He was Chief Young Crazy Fox, son of one of my best and oldest friends, the Pawnee Chief Thunder Gulch.

After greetings were exchanged, I outlined to Chief Young Crazy Fox our problem. He was very interested, offered his cooperation and suddenly came up with a most unusual idea.

Here was the plan. He would gather together a small party of his braves, pretend to attack the cattle thieves, then turn and run, hoping that the thieves would follow. "If the plan worked," he said, "and they followed, he would lead the rustlers down into Gasper Gulch."

At first, I didn't get the point at all. Of course, I didn't know the area very well. I never even heard of Gasper Gulch. And there are some strange workings of nature that are hard to believe, unless you see them with your own eyes. Who would have believed stories of the great geysers, of boiling mudflats or a great inland lake so salty that one could *not* sink in its waters! Who would have believed the story of Gasper Gulch, another baffling phenomenon of nature!

But I took the word of Chief Young Crazy Fox, and Bumper and I, together with a couple of ranchers from Five Sleep, rode out to the edge of Gasper Gulch and awaited developments, according to plan.

All of these murderous thieves certainly had it coming to them, but had I known their fate, bad as they were, I might have hesitated. All Chief Young Crazy Fox told me was to ride to the edge of the gulch and wait, but under no circumstances to descend into the valley.

After an hour or so, we saw a great cloud of dust across the plain, and then a bunch of Indians riding directly towards us. In pursuit were more than 30 horsemen, the cattle thieves who had been decoyed by Chief Young Crazy Fox and his braves. On and on they came, thundering hoofs that could be heard for miles around. The rustlers were firing from time to time, but the pace was so fast that their aim was poor. Suddenly, the Indians came right up to the gulch and down they went. Instantly however, they made a sharp turn and rode out single file into a narrow tunnel passageway.

Seconds later, the rustlers poured into the gulch and then stopped to look around for the Indians. They could see no exit. They felt that they were trapped, as one by one they fell off their horses onto the ground, just as if shot.

While Bumper and I were marveling at this strange happening, Chief Young Crazy Fox and his men rode up from behind us and told us that all of the bandits were dead by now. "You see," Black Diamond, "this gulch is a freak of nature," said Chief Young Crazy Fox. "There is almost no air in the gulch to breathe. Ten minutes trapped in this gulch and any human being will die from suffocation. Only those who know the secret exit can ride into the gulch and out and live."

Suddenly, Chief Young Crazy Fox gave a signal to his men and they again rode hard into the gulch. There was nothing I could do to stop them. Chief Young Crazy Fox stayed behind. He told us that if they rode fast enough, they could gather up the horses and lead them into the tunnel to safety. As he spoke, they were gathering up the panting horses and pulling them into the tunnel.

"This is a terrible thing," I told the Chief. "What about those humans?"

"They were bad men," he replied. "They deserve to die. That is according to our Code, and it is we who did it. We have done it for you, but you can have no blame. There are no more cattle thieves anywhere in this part of the territory. The ranchers, their wives and children are safe."

What caused the lack of oxygen in the air at Gasper Gulch? No one has ever found out the cause of this phenomenon. But then what is the answer to so many other mysteries of nature?

'OH, GIVE ME A HOME WHERE THE BUFFALO ROAM,' GOES THE SONG. LISTENING TO THAT KIND OF MUSIC, YOU MIGHT GET THE IDEA THAT ALL WAS PEACE AND TRANQUILLITY OUT IN THE OPEN SPACES AMONG THE TUMBLEWEED AND HILLS. RED FIRE THOUGHT SO TOO UNTIL THE DAY HE CROSSED PATHS WITH THE MASON BROTHERS... TWO OF THE MEANEST DRY GULCHERS YOU EVER WANT TO MEET UP WITH. RIDE THEM WITH RED FIRE AND SEE WHY HE SET OUT IN GRIM PURSUIT OF THE RUTHLESS OUTLAWS AND FINALLY GOT HIS...

REVENGE at BLACK ROCK



EARLY ONE SUNDAY MORNING AS RED FIRE WAS HEADING FOR THE RANCH OF HIS FRIEND JIM BRACKEN, WHO HAD INVITED HIM FOR DINNER.



REDFIRE



YOU CAN COUNT ON ME, JIM!
MEANWHILE I'M GOING TO
HEAD FOR BLACK ROCK...
I'VE GOT A HUNCH!

A SHORT WHILE LATER, AFTER VISITING SEVERAL RANCHERS ON HIS WAY TO BLACK ROCK



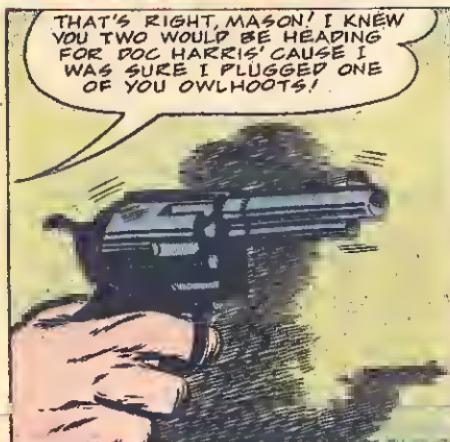
MEANWHILE ON THE OTHER SIDE OF TOWN IN DOC HARRIS' OFFICE



THAT MEANS YUH FAILED, OOG! BETTER START SAYIN' YOUR PRAYERS NOW...THAT WAS YOUR LAST OPERATION!



THAT'S RIGHT, MASON! I KNEW YOU TWO WOULD BE HEADING FOR DOC HARRIS' CAUSE I WAS SURE I PLUGGED ONE OF YOU OWLHOOTS!



NOW AINT THAT TOO BAD, SONNY! MAYBE THIS'LL TEACH YUH HOW I HANDLE A MEDDLER!



WHAT THE... I-IT'S YOU AGAIN!

MY HUNCH WAS RIGHT!



YOU'RE 'TOO WET BEHIND THE EARS TO TAKE ME, SONNY! SEE HOW YUH LIKE THIS WATER!

OOOOOH! MY EYES! I-I CAN'T SEE!



AS TULLY MASON MAKES HIS GETAWAY HE FIRES AND HITS WHITE LIGHTNING

THIS'LL MAKE SURE THAT YOUNG WADDY DON'T FOLLOW ME THIS TIME.



SHORTLY AFTER



DOC HARRIS VOLUNTEERED TO GIVE HIS PINTO TO RED FIRE SO THAT HE COULD TAKE UP THE TRAIL OF THE RUTHLESS TULLY MASON.



THEN ONE DAY...



RED FIRE FADED BEING HIT WHEN HE HEARD THE SHOT AND QUICKLY PLANNED A SCHEME TO CAPTURE MASON.



RED FIRE GUESSED RIGHT.



AS SOON AS TULLY MASON ENDED HIS SLUGS INTO THE BRUSH AT WHAT HE FOOLISHLY THOUGHT WAS RED FIRE HE GOT THE SURPRISE OF HIS LIFE.

WHAT THE...? SINCE YOU SHOT MY BOOTS FULL OF HOLES I'M SURE YOU'LL FORGIVE ME MY BARE FEET...



...AND MY BARE HANDS!



ALL RIGHT, KID... YUH GOT ME... GO AHEAD AN SHOOT!

SHOOTING IS TOO GOOD FOR AN HOMBRE LIKE YOU, MASON. I'M TAKING YOU BACK TO BLACK ROCK TO HANG FOR THE MURDERS YOU'VE COMMITTED!



A FEW DAYS LATER AFTER RED FIRE DELIVERED TULLY MASON TO THE SHERIFF AT BLACK ROCK...

HELLO, DOC. I JUST DROPPED BY TO SEE WHITE LIGHTNING'S GRAVE...

ALL RIGHT... RED FIRE... FOLLOW ME!



WHITE LIGHTNING! YOU'RE ALIVE!

BUT DOC, YOU SAID HIS LEG WAS BROKEN, DIDN'T YOU?

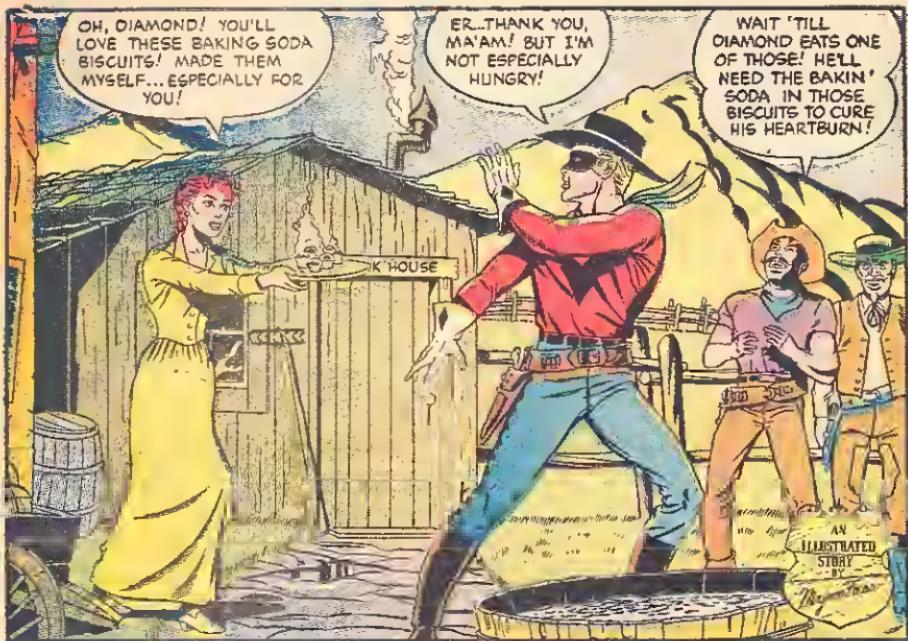


YES, BUT LUCKILY IT WASN'T A COMPLETE FRACTURE. AFTER THE WAY YOU SAVED MY LIFE... I NURSED HIM NIGHT AND DAY... HE'LL LIVE!



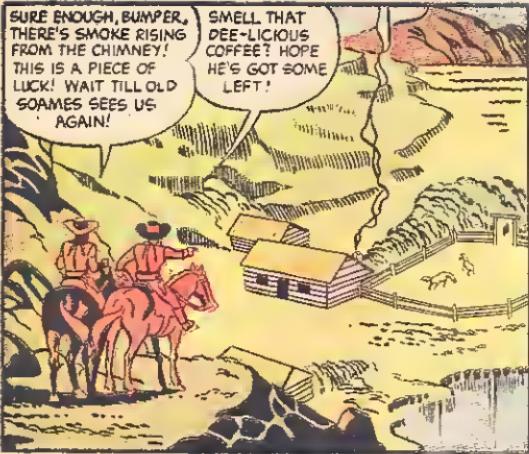
SO... AS THE MAN IS BENT, THE BOY WILL CRY... ONLY THIS TIME THEY ARE TEARS OF HAPPINESS!





CAN THIS BE THE FEARLESS BLACK DIAMOND WE SEE RUNNING AWAY...? IS IT POSSIBLE THAT THE WESTERN CRIME FIGHTER WHOSE GUNS ECHO LIKE THUNDER ON THE SIDE OF JUSTICE HAS FINALLY MET HIS MATCH...? READ ON AND SEE WHAT CIRCUMSTANCES PLUNGE THE FAMOUS BACHELOR INTO A POSITION WHERE HE'D FACE A WOLF PACK OR THE WEST'S TEN WORST BADMEN, RATHER THAN SURRENDER TO THE WILES OF A ROMANTIC MINDED FEMALE TRYING TO CONVINCE HIM, HE'S...

The Marrying Kind



THINGS AREN'T TOO GOOD, I RECKON! SOME PESKY HOSS-THIEVIN' IS JUST ABOUT RUINING HALF THE RANCHERS IN THIS VALLEY! EVERY ONCE IN A WHILE WE CATCH SOME OF THE OWL-HOOTS, BUT WE'VE NEVER BEEN ABLE TO GET A CLUE TO THE LEADER...

UNCLE BILL! SO THIS IS BLACK DIAMOND! HE'S SO HANDSOME! WHAT MUSCLES!

THIS IS MY NIECE, LUCY! SHE'S FROM BACK EAST!

ER... HOWDY, MA'AM! GUESS BUMPER AND I WILL BED DOWN IN THE BUNKHOUSE NOW!



THE NEXT NIGHT, ON THE FRONT PORCH, DIAMOND WAS AGAIN CORNERED BY LUCY...

OH, THERE YOU ARE! I FEEL I OWE YOU AN APOLOGY AFTER THE WAY I ACTED YESTERDAY!

NO NEED FOR THAT. MAMA! I HOLD NO GRIEVANCES AGAINST WOMEN!

LOOKS LIKE YOU'LL BE BUSY! SEE YOU, DIAMOND!

OF LUCY'S APOLOGY THREW HIM OFF BALANCE, HER NEXT MOVE CONFUSED HIM EVEN MORE! BEFORE THE MARSHAL KNEW WHAT WAS HAPPENING, A PAIR OF SOFT ARMS CREST AROUND HIS NECK.

ISN'T THE MOONLIGHT THRILLING?

HUH...OH, SURE...



WAIT! WHERE DID THOSE GUNSHOTS COME FROM?

OH, DARN! THERE WOULD BE TROUBLE NOW!

DIAMOND...SADDLE UP QUICK! THE RUSTLERS ARE IN THE NORTH PASTURE! THEY'RE MAKING OFF WITH THE HORSES!



I'LL SADDLE RELIAPON FOR YOU!

WELL, OKAY! IF YOU KNOW HOW...! BUT HURRY...



LUCY DOES HURRY, AND WHEN DIAMOND COUNTS, DISASTER...

THE SADDLE'S SLIPPING...

I MUST'VE DONE SOMETHING WRONG AGAIN!



HE SUDDENLY FALLS...HITS HIS HEAD...AND BLACKNESS DESCENDS...



...COMES TOO, A HALF HOUR LATER...IN LUCY'S ARMS...

OUCH... THE RUSTLERS! I'VE GOT TO...

YOU POOR DARLING! HURT BECAUSE OF CLUMSY ME!



GREAT GULLIES, DIAMOND! WHILE YOU WERE SNOZZING, THOSE SADDLE-TRAMPS MADE OFF WITH FIFTY HEAD OF CATTLE AND FIVE HORSES!



THE DAYS PASS...AND DIAMOND MAKES A DISTURBING OBSERVATION! HE'S SLOWLY BEING DRIVEN MAD BY LUCY'S UNWELCOME ATTENTIONS...

PLEASE, MISS LUCY!
I'LL BUST IF I EAT
ANOTHER HOTCAKE...

PLEASE, MISS LUCY!
I'M TURNING IN FOR
THE NIGHT! STOP
TRAILING ME...

OH, NO! SHE
SCORCHED MY
LAST SHIRT!



ONE EVENING, HE MANAGES TO SLIP AWAY TO MAKE PLANS FOR ROUNDING UP THE RUSTLERS...GUESS WHO'S LISTENING IN INTENTLY....

BUMPER AND I WILL RIDE AS TOP HANDS ON YOUR COLLECTED HEROES...AND THEN, IF THE RUSTLERS ATTACK, WE'LL NAIL THEM!

WHATEVER YUH SAY!



AND AS THE DAWN CUTS THROUGH THE SHADOWS OF THE LONG NIGHT, DIAMOND AND BUMPER WAIT PATIENTLY AT A NARROW MOUNTAIN PASS...

THAT GANG WILL HAVE TO COME THROUGH HERE BEFORE DAYBREAK!

THERE THEY COME! BOY, WHAT A HAUL OF OWL-HOOTS THIS'LL BE!



IT'S THE LAW!
LET'S SKEDADDLE,
JAKE!

TOD AND JAKE BARRETT!
ROUND 'EM UP LIKE THE RUSTLING SNAKES THEY ARE!



YOU'RE NOT GOING ANY PLACE,
BARRETT!

DON'T TRY 'N STOP
ME, IF YUH WANNA
KEEP YORE HIDE
AIR-TIGHT!



WITH THE AGILITY OF A DEER, THE BRAVE LAWMAN SPRINGS UPON HIS QUARRY...



AFTER TEMPORARILY SUBDING BARRETT, DIAMOND TURNS TO SEE LUCY...



PICKING UP A ROCK, SHEAIMS WIOLY...



...YOU LEAVE DIAMOND ALONE! OH, I'VE HIT THE WRONG HEAD...



DIAMOND COMES TO... IN LUCY'S ARMS AGAIN...

NO... DON'T TELL ME WHO SLUGGED ME!
I'M AFRAID I KNOW!

WELL, WE GOT MOST OF THEM... EVEN IF BARRETT DID GET AWAY!



THE NEXT DAY, A SURPRISE VISITOR FROM BACK EAST ARRIVES AT THE SONES RANCH...

LUCY, PEAR! WHY DID YOU SEND ME A LETTER BREAKING OUR SIX YEAR ENGAGEMENT?

FOR THE FIRST TIME IN SIX YEARS... I'VE KNOWN WHAT A REAL HEMAN'S LIKE! I'LL NEVER MARRY YOU, HENRY!



BLACK DIAMOND SEIZES THE OPPORTUNITY AND CATCHES UP TO THE DEJECTED AND JILTED HENRY...

LOOK, ARE YOU REALLY SERIOUS ABOUT MARRYING THIS GAL?

I'VE BEEN SERIOUS FOR SIX YEARS! BUT YOU HEARD... SHE WANTS A REAL WESTERN HE-MAN—LIKE YOU!

IF SHE TONIGHT YOU WERE A HERO, THAT MIGHT CHANGE HER MIND!

I GUESS IT WOULD... BUT ANYONE CAN PLAINLY SEE I'M NOT THE HERO TYPE!



I THINK I CAN FIX THAT! TOD BARRETT'S HIDING OUT IN THE HILLS! IF WE GO UP THERE AND CAPTURE HIM, BUMPER CAN CONVENIENTLY SHOW UP WITH LUCY JUST AS YOU'RE HOLDING A GUN ON THIS DESPERADO!

IF YOU WANT TO MARRY THIS GAL... ALL'S FAIR IN LOVE AND WAR!

LATER, AT BARRETT'S HIDEOUT...



ARE YOU READY TO TANGLE WITH ME AGAIN, BARRETT?

SURE, MARSHAL! ALWAYS WILLIN' TO OBLIGE...

DROP EM, DIAMOND OR GET VENTILATED!

SO YOU HAD ANOTHER RATTLER BEHIND THE DOOR!

TOD BARRETT ALWAYS HAS AN ACE IN THE HOLE!



SUDGIN' A CALM AND UNDAUNTED
HENRY STEPS INTO THE PICTURE...

WON'T YOU
PLEASE GIVE
UP THAT
FIREARM?

WHY...YOU
LITTLE RUNT!
I'LL PULVERIZE
Y...

I DETEST
VIOLENCE...
EXCEPT IN
DIRE
EMERGENCY!

OWWW!

MY ATHLETIC CLUB WILL NEVER
BELIEVE THIS...BUT WHY NOT...?
AFTER ALL, I AM
THE JUDO CHAMP
OF BOSTON!

GET HIM
AWAY FROM
ME!



DIAMOND STARES IN AMAZEMENT AS HENRY
GETS BARRETTIN AN ARM LOCK! SUDDENLY BUMPER
AND LUCY ARRIVE...

WHY, HENRY! YOU'RE
FIGHTING...WITH A
DANGEROUS DES-
PERADO!

DIAMOND! MAKE THIS
LOCO MAVERICK LET GO...
I'LL SURRENDER!



PARLING! YOU'RE
A REAL HERO...I'VE
BEEN SO WRONG
ABOUT YOU!

LET'S GET THESE
RUSTLERS TO
JAIL! AND I'M
SURE THE TWO
LOVEBIRDS
WANT TO BE
ALONE!

AND JUST
AS I WAS
GETTING
USED TO THE
IDEA OF
BEING BEST
MAN AT
YOUR
WEDDING!



BUMPER NEVER DID QUITE GET TO THE WEDDING...

DIAMOND!
HELP!

GOOD LUCK,
KIDS!

WAIT FOR ME, YOU
HANDSOME BRUTE!
I JUST ADORE MEN
WITH MUSTACHES!

DOGONE IT,
DIAMOND! LET'S
GET GOING! THE
FOREMAN'S
DAUGHTER WANTS
TO HITCH UP
WITH ME!

OKAY, BUMPER!
LET'S HEAD FOR THE
HILLS WHILE WE'RE
BOTH STILL SINGLE!



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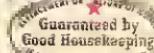
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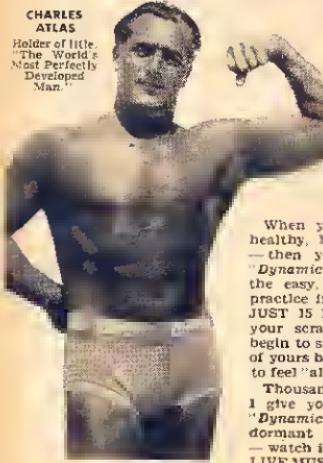
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